

At a time when we have so many pressing issues, I am really saddened that the majority wants to conduct this political charade. If there are problems with the health care law, we don't have to repeal it. We could change parts of it. We could tweak it. We could put out of the bill what we don't like and keep in the bill what we do like. But, unfortunately, the attitude and the decision has been made to try to repeal the whole bill.

My constituents understand that as we speak now the Rules Committee is discussing what kind of amendments to allow. And we know no real meaningful amendments, if anything, are going to be allowed. The Republican majority coming in says they're going to have open rules. And we're not going to have really an open rule on the first bill that they're going to attempt to pass, which is a repeal of health care reform. I think that's wrong. I think there are many of us who feel strongly that there ought to be some amendments that we can put in to ensure that the good coverage that we have achieved in the health care bill is kept.

Surely, it's not everything that's wrong with the health care bill which my colleagues oppose. I want to ask them, since they want to repeal the bill, are they against the part of the bill which says that you can keep your child on your health care coverage until age 26? I think my constituents like that, and I think theirs do as well. Do they want to repeal the part that says that an insurance company can no longer deny you coverage because of a so-called preexisting condition? I think that's something that all constituents like and appreciate. Do the people that want to repeal the health care reform bill want to say to insurance companies that it's okay to put caps on people, so when they pay their premium year in and year out and then they finally get sick and ask for coverage, the insurance companies can tell them, Well, sorry. Not only do you have a preexisting condition, but there's also a cap on benefits, either an annual cap or a lifetime cap. So, therefore, we're not going to cover you at all. I don't think anybody's constituents want that part to be repealed.

And what about the doughnut hole for seniors in Medicare part D? Seniors have found it very, very difficult. They get part of their prescription drugs paid for and then there's a doughnut hole which is for a long time. They have to pay for everything themselves while at the same time still paying their monthly premiums to the government. And then, at the end, they get the government to come in and help them. That has put a tremendous burden on seniors. And what the health care bill which was passed by the last Congress does is it eventually removes that doughnut hole for seniors. Seniors can get back money, and it starts right away, where they can get back money to pay for those prescription drugs.

So I think that we hear a lot about the lame-duck session and how we all

work together and how the big question of the new Congress is going to be: Is it going to be a stalemate; is it going to be gridlock; or is it going to be people coming together in a bipartisan fashion to try to work together? If the first bill that the Republican majority is putting on the floor is any indication, it seems to me that they have chosen gridlock. And I'm really sorry about that. Because I will admit there are some things in the new health care law that should be changed, and that we should work across the aisle together to make sure that changes. But to repeal the provisions that benefit my constituents and everyone else's constituents all across America, to me makes no sense whatsoever.

The big insurance companies have had it too big, too long. And my Republican colleagues, unfortunately, are right in bed with them. And I think that is something that the American people ought to see. Who do we care about, the big insurance companies? Or do we care about the average American who is struggling day in and day out to get health care coverage? We have almost 50 million Americans without coverage. And it's not only the people who are not covered now, but it's working people who will find out in the days and months ahead if there is no health care bill, that they will be added to the rolls of people who are uncovered, and that people working hard will find out that the 50 million will swell to 60 million, 70 million, and maybe even more.

□ 1420

So it is going to affect all of us because the health care costs have been rising way, way beyond the rate of inflation, and that is why we needed to have health care reform.

I would say to my friends on the other side of the aisle: Let's not posture politically. Let's try to put our heads together and work in a bipartisan fashion to do something for the American people. If there is something in the bill that needs to be changed, then we should change it, but repeal is not the answer.

Every major bill, from Social Security, to the Civil Rights bills of the 1960s, to Medicare and Medicaid, all had to be tweaked after they were passed. All had to be changed a little bit. It is the same thing with this bill. We should not repeal it. We should fix it.

OMISSION FROM READING OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION—ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4; ARTICLE V

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, earlier today, the historic occasion of the first reading of the United States Constitution here on the floor of the House took place, and it was a very

good bipartisan occasion where nearly one-third of all the Members of the House of Representatives participated in that reading. Unfortunately, during the reading, one of the Members, while he was reading from the notebook at the podium, turned two of the pages, and two pages of the Constitution were not read.

So I ask unanimous consent that I now read those pages and that they be placed into the reading of the Constitution as it occurred earlier today so that we have a complete reading of the Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I will now read at the end of article IV, section 4.

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.

Article V.

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States."

That is the portion that was omitted earlier and that, by unanimous consent, is now included in the reading of the Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OUR HOMELAND, THE FORGOTTEN THIRD FRONT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, more border agents are being sent to the border. The border, as we all know, is violent, dangerous, and it is not safe. Drugs and guns and people and money cross back and forth across the border because two nations do not have operational control of that border. The border is desolate. It is hard. It is a war zone—but Madam Speaker, I am not talking about the border of the United States with Mexico. I am talking about the southern border, or the border with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

That's right. Border Patrol agents from the United States are going to Afghanistan to protect the Afghan border

from the Taliban coming in from Pakistan. It is a war zone over there, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, has said we are going to contribute Border Patrol agents to protect the border of Afghanistan. There are already 25 there, and more are on the way.

Now, Madam Speaker, why are Border Patrol agents from the United States going to Afghanistan?

The marines and our soldiers and our troops over there can do the job. More importantly, we need the Border Patrol agents over here. "Homeland security" means that the Secretary of Homeland Security protects the American homeland, not the homeland of some other nation.

We need the help.

In fact, we need the military on our southern border. Our border is a war zone. Drugs and people and money crisscross our border with Mexico. It is a violent place. It is the third front. More recently, we have had several people murdered on the battlefield on our border. Let me relate three of those.

One of those was a 27-year-old female police chief in Mexico—right on the border with the United States. Chief Hermila Garcia was on the job for 51 days, and she was shot down, shot seven times by the drug cartels. A recent homicide on the border.

Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was shot in the back while he was protecting our border. Ironically, he had been to Iraq and Afghanistan as a soldier, as a marine, and now he was back here, killed on our border.

Then David Hartley, a citizen, was murdered on Falcon Lake, in Texas, when he was with his wife, Tiffany, as they were viewing an old mission. Shot and killed by the drug cartels.

Our homeland is not protected adequately, and it is time that we put Border Patrol agents on our border but also that we put the National Guard on our southern border. It is the third front. Homeland Security should protect it.

And that's just the way it is.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, today, I have a photograph of Tyler Jordan, whose father, Phillip, was a marine gunnery sergeant killed in Iraq. I saw this photograph about 5 years ago in a national paper, and I felt that I needed to have this photograph for myself to be able to be reminded of war and the pain of war.

On Tuesday, I had the privilege and humbling experience to visit the wounded warriors at Walter Reed. I saw the pain these heroes were experiencing from the severe injuries they received fighting for this country. That's why today I show you the photograph

of Tyler Jordan's pain as he holds a folded flag at his father's funeral. This boy's pain and the pain of the heroes at Walter Reed are the reasons I've joined my colleagues in both parties in asking President Obama to bring our troops home.

Madam Speaker, this country has many problems. Maybe I am wrong, but sadly, it seems to me, the war in Afghanistan seems to be on the back burner.

Before Christmas, I read from a Washington Post article that quoted President Karzai as saying he now has three main enemies—the Taliban, the United States and the international community. He said in that article that, if he had to choose sides today, he would choose the Taliban.

There have been many articles written questioning the success of our troops in Afghanistan, but our troops have been successful. So why keep them in a country, risking their lives, when the President of that country supports the enemy?

The Afghan Government is corrupt. Not one American life should be sacrificed for such a dysfunctional, corrupt government.

In mid-December, President Obama released a review of the American strategy in Afghanistan that painted a positive picture of the progress being made there. This review is, at best, dubious. I agree with two national intelligence reports that were also released with a more realistic, negative assessment on the state of the war and our chance for success.

As I have said before, we are spending approximately \$7 billion a month, which is \$234 million a day, to fight a winless war for a corrupt government. Why do we continue to spend \$234 million a day so that some other child has to know Tyler's pain?

In closing, I would like to ask God, as I do every day on the floor when I speak, to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in his loving arms, to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I ask God, please bless this House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for the American people; and I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States that he will do what is right in the eyes of the American people.

And I will say three times: God, please, God please, God, please continue to bless America.

□ 1430

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE SHOULD LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE: BRING OUR TROOPS HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, this week as the 112th Congress begins, there is a lot of talk from the Republicans about ending business as usual and doing things differently than before. But for all the supposed change afoot, there's one critical matter on which the new majority is fully embracing the status quo—the war in Afghanistan that is now nearly a decade old. This war has been going on so long that 55 percent of my colleagues weren't here when it started.

We've heard plenty about changing the House rules, about changing the way we conduct the Nation's business, about changing the relationship between the government and the people. We've even heard about how a new law that will provide affordable health care to all Americans is somehow the greatest threat to the Republic and the constitutional order.

But on the subject of war—a disastrous war that has taken the lives of more than 1,400 Americans in Afghanistan and cost taxpayers some \$366 billion—the new congressional majority is interested in no change whatsoever.

In his speech yesterday, Speaker BOEHNER spoke of giving government back to the people. In his speech he talked about honesty, accountability, and responsiveness. Look, if he meant that, he should be listening to the 60 percent of people who believe the war in Afghanistan is not worth fighting. A clear majority of Americans realize what so many in Washington refuse to acknowledge—that this war represents an epic failure, a national embarrassment, and a moral blight on our Nation.

On this matter of life and death, this issue that will determine how history judges the United States, most of the Representatives in the House, in the people's House at that, have told the people that their point of view doesn't matter, that we know better than what they know. As usual, the people are way ahead of their policymakers, just as they were 4 years ago on Iraq. They may hear reassuring platitudes from Washington about how we're on track, but they can see the news for themselves. They can see that the security situation is in decline, that casualties are up, that the Taliban is strong, and that Afghan governance is ineffective at the very best and corrupt at the worst.

So I can't think of anything more patronizing than to tell them not to worry their pretty little heads about the war, that us grown-ups in Washington have it all taken care of. We're not bowing before them, Madam Speaker; we're sticking our finger in their eyes.